English Department Policy Documents
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Department Bylaws

I. Name and Institutional Context

These bylaws are created for the Department of English and Comparative Literature of the McMicken College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Cincinnati. The following supersede these bylaws: college bylaws, UC policies, rules of the UC Board of Trustees, and the contract between UC and the UC Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

II. Purpose

These bylaws create a governance structure to conduct the business of the department. The faculty asserts its authority to regulate its degree programs (including entry requirements, student evaluations, curriculum, class sizes, and program requirements) and its faculty affairs (including hiring, reappointment, promotion and tenure policy, and workload policy), and such other matters as may be within its jurisdiction.

III. Membership

The faculty shall consist of the Head and faculty of all ranks and titles. The faculty shall also include adjunct and visiting professors, regardless of rank, and faculty with joint appointments (i.e., people whose tenure home might be elsewhere).

Voting members of the faculty shall be those members with at least a partial appointment in the department and who (a) are full-time UC employees or (b) meet criteria as AAUP-represented adjunct faculty.

IV. Initial Appointments

Hiring proposals on behalf of the department are prepared by the Head, in consultation with the Steering Committee, and as informed by discussion with the general faculty. The Head appoints a search committee to vet candidates and to make recommendations to the department. New hires are approved by majority vote of those present at a meeting called to consider the search committee’s recommendations.
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V. Department Leadership

The officers of the department shall be the Head, Assistant Head, Program Directors, and Area Directors.

A. Head
The Head is the administrative and educational leader of the department whose nomination, appointment, responsibilities, performance review, and removal are laid out in the contract between the UC and AAUP.

B. Assistant Head
The Assistant Head is appointed by the Head and serves at the discretion of the Head. The Assistant Head carries out any administrative function delegated to him or her by the Head, such as scheduling, coordination of the annual review process, etc.

C. Program Directors
The Program Directors are appointed by the Head and serve at the discretion of the Head. The Program Directors shall be as follows: Director of Undergraduate Studies, Director of Graduate Studies, and Director of Composition. There is also an Associate Director of Composition, appointed by the Head in consultation with the Director of Composition. Each of these positions shall be filled at all times. The work of the Program Directors is coordinated by the Head.

The basic responsibilities of each Program Director (except where specified below) include:

- Coordinating and overseeing the recruitment, admission, and retention of graduate students (DGS)
- Communicating with students about the program
- Managing and coordinating student discipline and remediation processes
- Maintaining relevant student records (DUS, DGS)
- Certifying and approving all dissertation committees (DGS)
- Certifying students for graduation (DUS, DGS)
- Tracking alumni (DGS, DUS)
- Planning the curriculum
- Advising students and supervising faculty advisors (DGS, DUS) and training and supervising instructors (DC)
- Ensuring that instructors understand how their courses fit into the curriculum
- Scheduling classes (DC) or overseeing the scheduling process (DGS, DUS)

- Coordinating the work of Program Committees and persons assigned service tasks
- Coordinating with persons external to the department in all program affairs (e.g., on Graduate Council, Undergraduate Council, etc.)
- Coordinating any departmental aspects of University or College initiatives and programs (e.g., learning communities, internships, study abroad)
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- Preparing and updating annually a program handbook or other documentation to be published on the department Web site
- Preparing for and writing program review documents and accreditation reports (as required)

D. Area Directors
Area Directors are appointed by the Head and serve at the discretion of the Head. Area Directors coordinate the interests, initiatives, and responsibilities of faculty in the Literary and Cultural Studies, Creative Writing, and Professional Writing tracks. The duties of Area Directors include, but are not limited to: drafting of the annual undergraduate and graduate schedules (in consultation with the Program Directors and Head and/or Assistant Head); and meeting regularly with faculty to discuss program development.

The Director of Composition may perform duties equivalent to those of an Area Director with regard to the graduate track in Rhetoric and Composition, or he/she may appoint a member of the Rhetoric and Composition faculty for that task.

VI. Standing Committees

Much of the committee service in the department is voluntary, with membership subject to the approval of the general faculty, but the Head reserves the right to appoint committee members when there are too few volunteers. In the absence of bylaws to the contrary, a committee shall generally be chaired by its most senior faculty member. However, committees may also vote to select a chair.

The standing committees of the department are as follows:

A. Directors’ Committee (appointed by the Head)
Membership on the Directors’ Committee shall consist of the Head, Assistant Head, Program Directors, and Area Directors. The Directors’ Committee is charged with coordinating the work of the department’s leadership and with maintaining the department’s events calendar. The Head chairs the Directors’ Committee.

B. Steering Committee (elected at the first department meeting of the year)
See the department’s existing Steering Committee bylaws (Appendix I)
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C. Program Committees
Program Committees shall be chaired by the Program Directors.

- The Graduate Studies Committee shall consist of at least one tenured or tenure-track member from each of the department’s areas (Professional Writing, Rhetoric and Composition, Literary and Cultural Studies, and Creative Writing). Committee members will be selected by Area Directors, who will forward names of volunteers to the Program Director. The Graduate Studies Committee shall include only faculty who have taught graduate courses in the last 3 years.
- The Undergraduate Studies Committee shall be constituted like the Graduate Studies Committee – by area; at least one member shall also be from the educator Faculty.
- Program Directors have the discretion to invite others to join their committees as well.
- The Composition Advisory Committee shall consist of the Associate Director of Composition, the Composition Graduate Assistant and another graduate student, two tenure-line and three educator faculty. Typically, one of the tenure-line committee members will be selected from outside Rhetoric and Composition.
- Program Directors will consult closely with the Head and the other members of the Directors’ Committee when planning how to organize the work of committees and subcommittees to ensure efficiency across the department. Non-voting members of the faculty are welcome to be active as Program Committee members, and committees are encouraged to include student members as appropriate.

D. Area Committees
The Area Committees shall be: Professional Writing, Rhetoric & Composition (grad), Creative Writing, and Literary & Cultural Studies. Each Area Committee shall be chaired by the Area Director and shall consist of all faculty whose primary responsibilities fall within that area.

E. Diversity Committee
The Diversity Committee considers diversity at all levels within the department, and makes recommendations for initiatives, programming, policies, etc. to the Steering Committee and department. See the Diversity Committee’s mission statement (Appendix II)

F. Technology Committee
The Technology Committee considers the department’s various technological needs, with a special interest in establishing best practices for online instruction.

G. Boyce Committee
The Boyce Committee meets once a year to determine the winner of that year’s Boyce Teaching Awards. The membership of the committee shall consist of the previous year’s award winners plus one additional faculty member.
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H. Ad Hoc Committees
The Head may organize Ad Hoc committees at any time. Each such committee must be given a specific charge. Ad hoc committees shall be democratically elected when required (e.g., by the UC-AAUP contract) or when resources are to be allocated by the committee. The Head shall endeavor to include representation from relevant areas of the faculty in constituting all ad hoc committees. Some ad hoc committees may eventually be deemed important enough for multi-year extensions of their charge.

Examples of ad hoc committees are

- A search committee
- A committee on teaching assessment

VII. Standing Committee Procedures

In order to ensure transparency and democratic efficacy:

- All committees shall take attendance and keep brief minutes which they shall forward to the Head in a timely fashion.
- All committee chairs (including Area and Program Directors) shall inform committee members of meeting agendas, and accept recommendations for additional agenda items, no later than two business days in advance of scheduled meetings.
- All committee chairs shall initiate or entertain motions for votes after sufficient discussion, keep a record of vote outcomes, and forward all approved measures to the next level for review (see section VIII).

VIII. Faculty Meetings and Voting Procedures

Meetings of the general faculty and department committees shall be scheduled by the Head, the Program and Area Directors, or committee or subcommittee chairs respectively. Faculty members are expected to be available at these times. The schedule of general faculty meetings will be published at the start of the semester.

Meetings of the general faculty shall be held at least four times per year. Additional meetings will be called as necessary, with as much lead time as is feasible.

All personnel-related votes will be conducted by anonymous ballot, either at a meeting or via Survey Monkey (or an equivalent online service). A simple majority will decide each vote.
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The department's decision- and policy-making process shall be as follows:

A. Faculty members may not add items directly to the department meeting agenda; instead . . .

B. Faculty members shall take proposals concerning policies, curricular issues, finances (etc.) specific to a given area to the relevant Area Director in advance of regularly scheduled Area Committee meetings; the Area Director will incorporate these proposals into the next meeting agenda; on matters for which a vote is deemed necessary, the Area Director will allow time for discussion before calling a vote.

C. Any approved proposals pertaining to department policy, curricular issues, funding (etc.) shall be forwarded to the relevant Program Director by the Area Director in a timely fashion; the Area Director shall notify the relevant Program Director of all proposals not requiring the approval of the Steering Committee (concerning events programming, for example) in a timely fashion.

D. The Program Director will consult with the Steering Committee in a timely fashion, typically at the next Steering Committee meeting, regarding how to proceed; if the Steering Committee deems that there are policy-related (or other) conflicts or problems with the Area Committee’s proposal, the Program Director will request that the Area Director re-craft the proposal, in conversation with area faculty, taking the recommendations of the Steering Committee into consideration; if there are no conflicts or problems, the Steering Committee will vote on the proposal after sufficient discussion. Area Directors are encouraged to attend Steering Committee meetings when one of their proposals is slated for discussion.

E. Any proposals approved by a majority of the Steering Committee will be added, by the Head, to the agenda of the next department meeting.

F. Proposals made by faculty serving on a Program Committee are subject to the same procedures; after consulting with the Steering Committee, the Program Director will either request that the committee reconsider the proposal or will submit the approved proposal to the Head, as per steps D and E, above.

G. Proposals approved by the faculty at a department meeting become binding upon the department.

H. The above procedures are meant to facilitate effective, transparent, democratic decision-making within the department. When there is a failure of these procedures at the area or program level, a faculty member may bring a proposal directly to the Head who, in consultation with the Steering Committee, will recommend appropriate action. A faculty member may also make recommendations directly to the Head or the Steering Committee on matters superseding program or area oversight (e.g., on workload policy).
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IX. Financial Procedures

In accordance with Article 31.2.8 of the AAUP contract, the Head is responsible for the “management and oversight of the Academic Unit’s budget (all funds).” Normal financial procedures for which there exist departmental, college and/or university policies will be overseen by the department’s Business Manager. As a rule, individual faculty, groups of faculty, areas, programs, etc., may commit to the expense of departmental funds only provisionally, pending the approval of the Head, in consultation with the Directors’ Committee and the Business Manager. The Head and the Directors’ Committee will make a good faith effort to consider the reasoning behind unusual funding requests. At the same time, all faculty are encouraged to seek supplemental funding from Taft and other agencies.

X. Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure

See the department’s RPT policy document (Appendix III)

XI. Workload

See the department’s workload policy document (Appendix IV)

XII. Bylaws and Revisions of Bylaws

Amendments to these bylaws may be requested by the Head or proposed in writing (and duly seconded) by any voting member of the faculty and submitted to the Steering Committee for discussion and a vote. All amendments approved by the Steering Committee must be added to the agenda of the next general faculty meeting. Amendments shall be approved by a majority of those voting.

No less often than every five years, the Steering Committee shall review the bylaws and put forth proposed revisions that may be appropriate.

XIII. Implementation of These Bylaws

These bylaws supersede any existing departmental policies that might be in conflict with these bylaws, but do not affect or diminish the force of any other existing policies that were duly approved by the faculty.

[Approved by the Department of English & Comparative Literature on April 22, 2013]
Appendix I: Steering Committee Bylaws

I. Membership

A. Ex officio: Head, Directors of Graduate Studies, Undergraduate Studies, and Composition, all voting. At the discretion of the Head, the Assistant Head may also be a voting ex officio member.

B. Elected: Four (4) persons will be elected from among Educator faculty; four (4) persons will be elected from among tenure-track faculty. Each of the department’s four areas—Literature and Cultural Studies, Professional Writing, Rhetoric and Composition, and Creative Writing—shall be represented. When possible, the committee should include at least one assistant professor. Whenever a position cannot be filled by someone of the appropriate rank, an at-large member shall be elected from the bargaining unit faculty. New members of the Committee will be elected at the first Department meeting of the academic year.

All members will serve on the Committee for two (2) calendar years and can be reelected for additional terms. The terms will be staggered.

If a member of the Committee resigns, a replacement will be elected from the appropriate rank by the faculty within thirty (30) days from the date the written resignation is received by the Department Head. The elected replacement will serve for the duration of the original appointment. A replacement for someone who resigns during the summer will be made at the first faculty meeting of the academic year.

II. Structure

A. Department Head - Chairs all regularly-scheduled meetings (see IIIA below.)

B. Convener – Chairs special meetings of the Committee (see IIIB below) and regularly-scheduled meetings in the absence of the Head. The Convener must be an elected member of the Committee. The Convener will be elected by members of the Committee at the first Committee meeting of the academic year. He or she will serve for one (1) calendar year, and can be reelected to serve one (1) additional term.
Appendix I: Steering Committee Bylaws

III. Meetings

A. Regular meetings. The Head should schedule three (3) meetings per semester during the academic year. If there is insufficient business, the Committee may decide by email vote to cancel one of the meetings.

B. Special meetings. Special meetings can be called by the Head or the Convener upon the request of any full-time faculty member if the request is appropriate to the responsibilities of the Steering Committee (see IV below) or if the request involves issues that cannot be resolved through normal departmental administrative procedures and offices.

IV. Responsibilities

A. To serve in an advisory capacity to the Head of the department and to the Department in general.

B. To define and recommend searches for the replacement or hiring of new full-time faculty to the faculty as a whole. To advise the Head on the appointment of search committees.

C. To make recommendations on reappointment for Represented Adjunct and Educator ranks.

D. To advise the Head on academic leave applications.

E. To advise the Head on merit decisions (when applicable)

F. To advise the Head and other departmental administrative officers on matters of governance. In all or each of these capacities, the Committee may be charged either by the Head or by the Department as a whole, reporting its recommendations for approval to the person or body who initially gives the charge.

Revised January 28, 2019
Appendix II: Diversity Mission Statement

The Department of English & Comparative Literature at the University of Cincinnati is committed to creating and maintaining a community that is broadly diverse and inclusive. In all aspects of departmental operations, the English Department will promote full participation and access without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability status, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion and regional or national origin.
Appendix III: Workload Description and Policy

The Department of English is a comprehensive, complex unit with multiple missions involving scholarship, service teaching for baccalaureate students, teaching of undergraduate majors, teaching and guiding the research of graduate students, and professional and community service. This workload description and policy supports these missions and helps to guarantee that our obligations to them will be met.

Full-time faculty members in the Department of English have a wide range of responsibilities. At a minimum, each faculty member is expected to fulfill obligations arranged under three broad and traditional headings: (1) scholarly and creative activity; (2) classroom and other forms of teaching; and (3) service to the profession, department, college, university, and community. The Department views these three areas as integrated and inseparable.

I. Scholarly and creative activity

Full-time faculty members are expected to engage in such activity. This work is distinct from and in addition to the activity required to keep abreast of the current state of one’s discipline. Publication is the primary evidence of such activity. Tenure-track faculty should endeavor to publish major projects and shorter works on a regular basis, such as a major work every 5 – 8 years and a shorter piece each year or two. This work should actively contribute to the mission of the Department and make a contribution to the field; it may appear in conventional print or electronic form. Other evidence of scholarly and creative activity includes editing of professional journals, individual volumes, or book series, organizing conferences in one’s field, presenting at professional conferences, giving invited readings and lectures, writing successful fellowship and grant applications, presenting exhibitions, productions, and other work for peer review and contributing to the field.

Educator faculty are hired primarily for teaching and service and are expected to do high quality work in these areas. They are also expected to stay current in their field and to pursue opportunities for professional development and activity with the time available given their teaching loads. In order to move toward promotion, increased engagement in high quality teaching, service, and professional activity needs to be demonstrated.
Appendix III: Workload Description and Policy

II. Classroom and other forms of teaching

A. Each faculty member will meet all assigned classes, be prepared for them, and be on time to them. All unexpected absences require timely notice to the departmental office. Each faculty member will note on his or her syllabus any expected absences due to conference presentation, lectures, reading, and the like, and so notify the departmental office.

B. At the beginning of each course, the faculty member will provide students with a syllabus, on paper and/or electronically, containing the faculty member’s grading standards and expectations, an attendance policy, and other items as are appropriate (for example, course goals, discussion topics, statements pertaining to academic integrity/plagiarism and special needs), and a clear calendar presenting major assignments. Faculty should examine the Faculty Senate’s “Resolution on Course Syllabi” at http://www.uc.edu/facultysenate/syllabi.html.

C. Faculty are expected to make use of Blackboard or other on-line learning platforms to post syllabi, assignments, and other classroom materials and communicate with students when necessary. Faculty are encouraged to upload their course descriptions to the Registrar’s list of classes using the “Course Preview Tool” on Blackboard.

D. Some form of writing, normally several shorter papers and/or a longer one, should be expected of all students in a class. (This standard may not always be applicable, e.g. in some language and linguistic courses.) Excepting journals and similar informal writing assignments, all written work should be evaluated in accordance with the goals of the course and, when returned to the student, contain clear comments explaining the faculty member’s evaluation.

E. Each faculty member will be available to students during regular office hours that are indicated both on the course syllabus and in the departmental office. Faculty will also respond to student inquiries in a timely manner.

F. Tenure-track faculty members will normally be involved with directing or serving as readers for doctoral dissertations and examinations, masters theses, honors theses, independent study projects, and the like. Some will be asked from time to time to take on such duties in other departments and other universities.

G. Advising students is an essential faculty activity. Faculty need to be knowledgeable about the structure of departmental programs and requirements. Other tasks which will be performed as necessary include writing recommendations for employment, professional schools, or awards, giving career counseling, orienting new students, and suggesting other university resources for students who need, for example, help with their writing, English as a Second Language classes, financial assistance, counseling, etc. This role assumes familiarity on each faculty member’s part with the resources available in the university.
Appendix III: Workload Description and Policy

H. Each faculty member should be prepared, if asked, to teach courses according to the department’s needs, particularly in the specific area of expertise for which the individual faculty member was hired. As appropriate, each faculty member will be available to teach graduate-level seminars, undergraduate major courses, certificate courses in or pertinent to creative writing, professional writing, and primary and secondary education, undergraduate service courses, and composition courses. In order to teach at the graduate level, faculty are expected to be active publishers in their area of specialization.

I. Because courses offered by this department fulfill a variety of departmental, college, and university requirements (e.g. major distribution, A&S Literature, General Education), teachers must design their courses explicitly to address those different requirements.

J. Each faculty member will regularly seek student evaluation of his/her teaching, will consult with peers about teaching effectiveness, and will use this information for reflection and improvement as a teacher—as well as presenting it for tenure, promotion, reappointment, and annual review decisions.

III. Service to the profession, department, college, university, and community

A. Faculty members may serve the profession through such activity as becoming involved in the work of professional organizations, editing professional journals or book series, serving on editorial boards, consulting, reviewing manuscripts and proposals, directing academic conferences, serving as a juror or judge in a competition in one’s field, and performing similar functions.

B. Each faculty member should attend and take an active part in departmental meetings whenever they are called.

C. Each faculty member will regularly serve on committees in the department: RPT, Steering, Undergraduate Studies, Graduate Studies, search, and the like; service on these committees is crucial.

D. Other departmental service needs arise regularly and require the assistance of each faculty member as appropriate. These include interviewing candidates for positions, judging awards, evaluating applications (e.g. for scholarships, employment, teaching assistantships, etc.) hosting visitors to the department, mentoring new colleagues, arranging programs such as reading and lectures.

E. Monitoring the university’s library holdings in one’s specialty is an important area of faculty service; such service facilitates the continuing research of faculty colleagues, graduate students, and undergraduates.

F. Advising student groups or publications is a valuable form of faculty service.
Appendix III: Workload Description and Policy

G. Faculty members will also participate in college and university governance and programs. Such participation includes service on the Taft and Library Committees, with the AAUP and the Faculty Senate, on College RPT, and on various other college and university committees, participation in Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning activities, orientation and university retreats, meeting with prospective students and colleagues, etc.

H. The Department offers numerous readings, lectures, and other events. Attendance at these, when possible, is part of our professional and collegial responsibility.

IV. Workload Policy—Implementation

In accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement, workloads for individual faculty members will be decided by the Head in consultation with the faculty member—in terms of the faculty member’s balance of scholarly, creative, or journalistic activity, classroom and other forms of teaching, and service. The usual teaching load for tenure-track faculty will be two courses a term; some faculty members may teach more or less depending on certain variables outlined below.

Tenure track faculty members who are not actively and successfully engaged in scholarly or creative activities, as defined in Section 1, or who do not take part in departmental or other forms of service, or who are not involved in the graduate program, or some combination of the above, may be asked to teach additional courses to a maximum of three per term. However, these faculty may lower their teaching load back to the standard level through increased productivity in the areas above. In addition, a faculty member who has not been publishing may write a proposal to the Head to reduce his or her teaching load for a specified period to permit a focused scholarly or creative project. If the faculty member successfully carries out the proposal, he or she may move to the lower teaching load.

Educator faculty will generally teach three courses a term, but may teach up to four courses depending upon program need and area of specialization. An educator faculty member engaged in departmental administration may teach fewer than three courses per term.

The workload policy will be overseen by the Steering Committee. This committee, minus the Head, is authorized by the department, in the case of a disagreement between the Head and a faculty member over workload, to consider the issue and to advise the Head.
Appendix III: Workload Description and Policy

Other exceptions to a faculty member’s assigned teaching load occur as follows: a) a faculty member may apply to the Head for a course reduction in a given academic year because of an exceptional writing commitment or obligation, membership on the AAUP bargaining team, or other substantial professional commitment as negotiated between the faculty member and the Head; b) instructors, adjuncts in the bargaining unit, and visiting faculty will typically have differing loads, to a maximum of three courses per term, as may be appropriate to the nature of their appointment; c) faculty members who hold the following positions will normally be assigned a reduced teaching load: Head, Director of Graduate Studies, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Director of English Composition, Director of Professional Writing, Director of Creative Writing, Director of Literary and Cultural Studies, Assistant Department Head, Composition Coordinators; d) assistant professors preparing for tenure may have one semester without teaching and one semester with a one course teaching reduction as needed to complete research and writing projects.

The overriding factor determining individual teaching assignments is the department’s responsibility to its professional mission as described at the beginning of this document.

[Approved by the Department of English & Comparative Literature, 5/24/ 2012]